

Prof. Donald L. Wilkes
School of Law
The University of Georgia
Athens, GE 30602-6012

1/30/96

Dear Professor Wilkes,

It is a remarkable coincidence that your article on Hosty's book reached me the day I finished about 70,000 words on it for the record for history. It confirmed to me that some of his lies would be persuasive even among some who have some familiarity with the subject matter but ~~is~~ not in the most intimate detail. Hosty's is I think the most determinedly dishonest of all the bad books on the assassination. I do not recall a single thing in it that is new and dependable. And it is dominated, as he is, by his strongly-held political beliefs that are irrational.

Even his title is a lie. He was taken off the Oswald case as soon as the police learned from Oswald, in Hosty's presence, that Oswald had left that letter for him. Later he was used for a few odds and ends on Oswald's background. Yet the book refers to him as "the lead investigator," too. *Title: "Assignment: Oswald."*

There never was any proof that Kostikov was a "wet ~~man~~ jobs expert. The CIA's own records admit that was a presumption only by those wild political nuts they had in Mexico, which is a long and separate story. They, with Ambassador Mann, tried hard to use the assassination as a means of getting World War III started. But if he had been, Oswald did not "meet" Kostikov. It was another consul who may also have been KGB, as so many of ours are CIA, and the Hosty mind could, of course say it makes no difference; they all are.

Nechiporenko was part of the money-making so many in the USSR went in for as soon as they saw the potential. The KGB in Minsk skinned Schiller and that gave the also greedy Mailer his disaster. I've a long manuscript on that for the record for history. The initial reports on the Nechiporenko book made it clear it was fiction to commercialize the market so I did not get it.

There is much that is wrong with Newman's book. I do not have the time to go into all of it. He knows better than the Duran story he tells. I know that because not being able to travel and thus not having had access to all the records I still have what leaves that without question, the CIA's Box 57 at the Archives, a summary of all Mexico City station communications to and from headquarters. That alleged Duran confession of having had sex with Oswald as beaten out of her when she was arrested, with no charge at all, by the Mexican police, who did that twice at the demand of the CIA hitshots. That scared even CIA HQ but its warning got there too late to avoid the second beating up. Yet based on this Newman says that Castro was "implicated" in the assassination.

Newman is wrong on the Birnquier, Odio and other stories, too, and his basic New Orleans line is fictional, that Oswald as "underground" until that "ringuier business that in addition Newman misdates. Oswald was never "undergriund" in any sense.

All of these people, each beginning with his own preconceptions that usually are political, ignore what is most obvious in their attributing the assassination to the Cubans or the Soviets, and that begins with the solution to the Cuba missile crisis of 1962. That threat to the world ended when JFK guaranteed Cuba against any invasion. That public assurance Khrushchev could not make, the reason, one of the reasons he put those missiles there. There simply is no way that Castro would knock off his only real protector.

That crisis ended with the beginning of Kennedy's and Khrushchev's groping toward peace, which each wanted very much. They exchanged some 40 letters the Soviets have been willing to disclose but our State Department is holding some back. There is simply no chance in the world that Khrushchev any more than Castro preferred the hawk Johnson to the dove Kennedy.

I take time for a little more on Newman, whose book does not connect Oswald with the CIA.

He was here, by invitation, for Thanksgiving two or three years ago, before he did his book, after his fine testimony to the Conyers committee on restoring the faith of the people, which I liked. He spent several hours just giving me the eye, rather openly for a man who all those years in intelligence. I told him of a record that had been stolen and how he could replace it, the real ^{Oswald} number the Texans gave the Commission, it was not 1172, which Lonnie Hudkins told me he'd made up. It was 119669. He was excited when he called me the following Monday to tell me he'd found it exactly where I'd told him in the Commission's records. He did not send me the copy he'd promised. I also showed him the proof I have from the Navy that Oswald had CRYPTO clearance. It was right at our copier and when I started to make a copy he told me not to, that he'd get his own. There is no mention in Newman's book of either that number Rankin kept secret or of Oswald's high clearances as a marina. Crypto required Top Secret.

Also by coincidence I had a call yesterday from a man who describes himself as a retired marine officer. He was close to Oswald's age and was in the Jacksonville class behind Oswald. Instead of being sent to Keesler from there he was sent to I think he said Millington, in Tennessee, for the same training. He did exactly the same work Oswald did and he had, had to have for it, CRYPTO and Top Secret clearances. He said he would write me more on this. He knew Oswald at Santa Ana but not intimately. They rode the bus to work together. *He also was at Atsugi*

2

In the course of pretending to ~~make~~ make the investigation it never made the government went into ~~so~~ so many diversions and digressions there is no limit on what the exploiters and commercializers can get into that has nothing at all to do with the actualities of the crime itself. There likewise is little possibility that even those relatively well informed about the assassination can know ^{enough} enough to evaluate the clever fakes. Hosty's is rather heavy-handed and openly dishonest but almost nobody can pick it all up. And when most of us are willing to believe the worst about any reds, real or imagined, that makes it easier for them.

The FBI knew Oswald was not a communist and ~~he~~ was in fact strongly anti-Communist. Yet Hosty refers through^{out} to him as a member of the party.

I think it was one of the many serious tragedies that the Commission coincided with the Civil Rights Act. Russell was strongly anti-Communist and I believe had been led to believe that Oswald was one. He told me he believed Johnson appointed him to the Commission to keep him from leading that fight in the Senate and that he fooled old Lyndon by not leaving that to others and instead spending less time on the Commission. I believe that if he had had the time to go into what he did not have time for he spotted the fact that Marina had been leaned on to get her to lie and that the single-bullet theory was impossible, he'd have picked up much more than was so very, very wrong including labelling the anti-Communist Oswald as a red. It does not take all that time and effort, if anyone on the Commission had the interest, to use the information it had to prove that it knew that Oswald was not and could not have been the assassin. With Russell's correct belief that the basis of the Report was wrong I think that with more time he'd have gone farther.

Hosty, by the way, is 100% wrong on Nosenko. He and Newman should have been asking why those in the CIA who wanted to prevent his defection wanted that so stringly and risked so much in the effort. Also what basis there was in fact for all the incredible abuse heaped on that man, who was as genuine as could be, as not a single one of the many stories made up to keep him from defecting was. I have those records from the FBI. The short answer on Nosenko is that when he told us about those almost 50 bugs the KGB had planted in the embassy walls that could not be detected. that was not throw-away information and he had to be genuine.

Hosty lies also in saying Oswald was sent to Minsk where there were training schools for spies and in saying that Marina's uncle was of the MVD police. He was a forestry expert and worked in that field only. Step by step, he lies about everything almost always just making it up. Please excuse the haste.

Thanks, and best wishes,

Harold
Harold Weisberg